

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) Watershed Work Group met on September 2, 1998, in Stockton. The BDAC Watershed Work Group (Work Group) was created to address the public's request to have more participation in the CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program). The Work Group provides a forum for stakeholders covering a broad geographic area and wide array of interests. Attendees of the Work Group meetings have direct interaction with the Watershed Program's Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT) and an opportunity to review and comment on Watershed Program draft documents. In addition, the Work Group may provide input to the BDAC on issues related to the Watershed Program.

Introductions

Robert Meacher (BDAC/Regional Council for Rural Counties), co-chair of the Work Group, began the meeting with introductions. A list of meeting participants is included (Attachment A). The following meeting materials were distributed: *Agenda*; *Program Goals and Objectives (draft)*; *Criteria for Participation (draft)*; *Developing a Draft Preferred Program Alternative (draft)*; and *Draft Preferred Program Alternative - 30 Year Policy Framework*.

Update of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Steve Ritchie (CALFED) presented an update of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED Program) and discussed the schedule of events. In March 1998, the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft PEIS/EIR) describing the three alternatives was released with the Plans/Strategies for the six common programs (Ecosystem Restoration; Water Quality; Water Use Efficiency; Levee System Integrity; Water Transfers; and Watershed Program) attached as appendices. Over 2,000 public comments were received during the comment period which closed July 1, 1998.

Currently, CALFED staff is developing a draft preferred alternative which will likely be a hybrid of features from the original three alternatives. A final draft will be distributed for public comment in December 1998. These documents will include the final draft preferred alternative as well as the final drafts of all six common program plans. The internal deadline, however, for these drafts is October 23, 1998, for reproduction purposes. Because the Watershed Program is newly developed, the IWAT and Work Group is on a fast track to catch up to the progress level of the other common programs and meet the deadlines. It is important to remember, however, that these documents are programmatic in nature.

The final draft will then go through a comment period and in late 1999, the federal government will sign the Record of Decision (ROD) on the Final PEIS/EIR. Implementation actions are scheduled to begin early 2000.

Work Group Discussion

During the previous Work Group Meeting in Chico on August 19, 1998, the Work Group was asked to review and comment on three working papers of the Watershed Program: Goals and Objectives, Criteria for Participation, and Stage I Implementation Actions. However, due to time constraints not all of the documents were discussed. The meeting facilitator, Dennis Bowker (Napa County Resource Conservation District), suggested that the Work Group revisit the topics and spend one hour on each document and try to reach a consensus on the issues.

During the discussions the majority of comments were directly related to the language of the documents. For easier viewing of these comments attached are redline/strike-out versions of the documents illustrating the recommendations which were consensus of the Work Group as well as the recommendations from the BDAC Watershed Public Workshops and the CALFED staff. In addition, revised documents incorporating these comments are also included.

The following documents are enclosed:

Attachment B - Recommendations to the Draft Goals and Objectives

Attachment B.2 - Revised Draft Goals and Objectives, dated September 21, 1998

Attachment C - Recommendations to the Draft Stage I Implementation Actions

Attachment C.2 - Revised Draft Stage I Implementation Actions, dated September 21, 1998

Attachment D - Recommendations to the Draft Principles for Participation

Attachment D.2 - Revised Draft Principles for Participation, dated September 21, 1998

General Comments

In addition to the discussion regarding the documents, the following comments were expressed by various meeting participants:

- After learning of Judy Heath's departure from the Watershed Program, the Work Group requested that their gratitude be extended to Judy Heath. Meeting participants stated that her work with the Watershed Program was appreciated by the stakeholders.
- Many comments were made regarding the exclusion of the Trinity River in the CALFED Program. Many meeting participants urged CALFED to include the Trinity basin in the CALFED Program stating that there is a significant relationship with the Bay-Delta system. Meeting participants agreed that John Mills should write a letter to CALFED and BDAC on behalf of the Work Group expressing these concerns. A similar discussion took place regarding the desire to include Southern California watersheds in the Watershed Program.

- A discussion was raised regarding the role and relationship of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) with the Watershed Program. It was recommended that FERC be included in the CALFED process. It was agreed upon by the meeting participants that a letter would be written to CALFED on behalf of the Work Group expressing this recommendation.
- It was suggested by a meeting participant that CALFED collaborate with existing efforts of watershed groups rather than starting new ones. Additionally, CALFED should better coordinate with existing federal and state programs.
- A discussion was raised regarding the notion of models and the use of models by CALFED. In an effort to further examine this topic, certain meeting participants agreed to exchange information and ideas over e-mail and report back to the Work Group.
- A comment was made regarding the security of funding for watershed projects. It was recommended that CALFED illustrate that funding for watershed activities will be derived from a federal and/or state source. This would alleviate the concern that counties will be held responsible to pay for watershed projects. It is also necessary to secure the funding mechanisms, not just identify them. Steve Ritchie responded that there is a section of the CALFED Program that solely addresses assurances and financing which is currently being developed.
- A Work Group member encouraged CALFED to develop flexible monitoring protocols so that landowners can partake in the process. Landowners should also be included in the development of these protocols. In addition, the Work Group and IWAT should create a stronger working relationship with the Comprehensive Monitoring, Research, and Assessment Program (CMARP). A question was raised to the CMARP representatives regarding the review of on-going monitoring efforts. CMARP representatives assured the meeting participants that the review of existing monitoring efforts is a major part of the program and is currently taking place.
- A meeting participant suggested that the Watershed Program avoid using the term "watershed management." The term "watershed restoration, maintenance, and conservation" was recommended in its place.
- A meeting participant requested that the electronic mail (E-mail) addresses be distributed so that the Work Group members may communicate more frequently. E-mail addresses are included in Attachment A.

Wrap-up

The meeting attendees were thanked for their participation. The next Work Group meeting was tentatively scheduled for the end of September. Recommended locations included Auburn, San Jose, Fresno, and Red Bluff.

ATTACHMENT A

Meeting Participants	Affiliation	E-mail Address
Ames, Laurel	Sierra Nevada Alliance	sierran@sierra.net
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Jungwirth, Lynn	Watershed Center	
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Nakamura, Gary	Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council	gmnakamura@ucdavis.edu
Newlin, Vickie	Butte County Water Division	
Ohlemutz, Rudolf	Contra Costa Water District	
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